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ABSTRACT

In response to the growing incidence of violence and vandalism in Connecticut schools, the state established the Interagency Task Force on School Security and the Citizens Advisory Council on Safe Schools to examine the problem. Two principal sources of information were developed, including a series of four regional hearings at which students, parents, school staff, and the public testified, and a questionnaire survey of Connecticut public school superintendents, teachers, and principals. The results indicated that the nature and extent of violence and disruption varied considerably from one type of community to another and from one school to another. Destruction and theft of school and personal property, as well as drug and alcohol use, were among the most severe problems reported. Lesser problems included assaults on students and teachers, intruders, and extortion. It was found that a number of assaults on teachers go unreported because teachers feel such assaults place their ability to handle students in question. The report includes 16 recommendations designed to alleviate the problems of violence and disruption in Connecticut schools. (JEH)

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D R A F T

**A STATE'S RESPONSE TO DISCIPLINE:
A CASE STUDY**

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A State's Response to Discipline: A Case Study

Introduction

It is generally conceded that a staggering crisis in student discipline exists in America's public schools everywhere. The problem had once been confined primarily to urban areas, where vandalism and other acts of violence gradually became the norm. In recent years, however, the lack of school discipline has become a national concern. One has only to review the eleventh Gallup Poll on Education to see that the citizenry accepts discipline as a major issue confronting its schools. In addition, nationwide studies conducted by the National Education Association and Research for Better Schools reveal that the lack of discipline permeates public schools. This growing concern with safety and security in the school environment has also led the public to conclude that the educational mission itself may be in jeopardy -- that teachers cannot teach effectively and students cannot realize their potential if both are preoccupied by threats of harassment and the possibility of physical injury.

Nevertheless, the problem of school discipline should first be viewed as a manifestation of all sorts of ills confronting America. Crimes against persons and property are rising at such a rapid rate that citizens in some states are being encouraged to purchase fire arms. Needless to say alleged causes for this range from the erosion of respect for authority of all kinds, whether it be the family, the church, the government or the school; the glorification of violence in the media, the disillusionment and desperation born of poverty and racism; and the growing preoccupation with self-interest

at the expense of the good of the community. Regardless of the causes of crime and violence in America, however, the point is that the manifestation of these problems in schools is only symptomatic of a larger social malady and must be viewed from that perspective.

This article describes the approach Connecticut used to study the nature and extent of school violence and vandalism.

Background

Between December, 1978 and February 1979, the State established both the Interagency Task Force on School Security and the Citizen's Advisory Council on Safe Schools to examine the problem of student violence and vandalism.

First, in December of 1978, Governor Ella Grasso directed the State Board of Education to establish an Interagency Task Force on School Security. Eleven different state agency heads were represented on the Task Force.¹ This Task Force specifically addressed the issue of violence in schools and what they could do to assist in alleviation of those problems.

The recommendations made by the Interagency Task Force on School Security would be reviewed by the Citizens Advisory Council on Safe Schools and augmented by its subsequent recommendations.

Citizens Advisory Council on Safe Schools

Next, the Commissioner of Education asked twenty-eight parents, educators and other professionals, and citizens from throughout the State to serve

¹The agencies represented included the Board of Higher Education, the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, the Connecticut Association of Chiefs of Police, the Connecticut Association of School Administrators, the Connecticut Justice Commission, the Department of Administrative Services, the Department of Children and Youth Services, the Department of Education, the Department of Public Safety, and the Judicial Department.

on the Citizens Advisory Council on Safe Schools. The Council spent twelve months studying the problem of violence and disruption in the state educational system.

In order to provide some degree of continuity, the Citizens Advisory Council was asked to review and further refine the recommendations of the Interagency Task Force. It was further charged with studying the nature and extent of violence and vandalism in the schools of Connecticut and with determining how the State government could respond more effectively to the problem of violence and vandalism in the schools.

Procedures

The Advisory Council had two principal sources of information upon which to proceed with its charge: a series of regional hearings, and the development and distribution of a questionnaire.

Regional Hearings

Four hearings were held between May and October, 1979 in different parts of the state in order to obtain information about the problems of school violence and disruption. The format for these sessions included a meeting with students in the afternoon, a meeting with staff members at the close of the school day, and an open meeting in the evening to which the public was invited.

Survey Design

The State Department of Education, Bureau of Research, Planning and Evaluation designed a questionnaire for public school students, teachers, principals, and superintendents. The questionnaire elicited information on experiences that took place during the 1978-79 school year. The respondents

were asked to share their perceptions about the problems of violence and disruption in the schools, and about the number and nature of violent incidents experienced by the teachers in those schools. All respondents were asked to rate the seriousness of fourteen different problems in the area of school violence and vandalism.

Population and Sample

The subjects of this study were the public elementary and secondary schools of the State of Connecticut. In order to draw a sample the Council divided the public schools of the State into four groups according to the types of communities they serve: (1) big city - total population more than 100,000; (2) fringe city - contiguous to a big city, with a population of more than 10,000; (3) medium city - population between 25,000 and 100,000 and not contiguous to a big city; and (4) small town - any community not included in the first three groups.

Schools were selected for the sample from each of the four groups on a random basis. All five of the large cities were included in the sample. Twenty of the 23 fringe cities were included, as were 16 of the 18 medium cities and 28 of the 119 small towns. In each school selected, the principal was asked to respond to a survey instrument. In each junior or senior high school selected, the principal was asked to distribute questionnaires to the first ten teachers (by alphabetical list of last names) in the school. Each elementary school principal was asked to distribute five teacher questionnaires in the same manner. (The decision to distribute a greater number of questionnaires to secondary school teachers was based on information contained in a 1978 study on school violence conducted by the National Institute of

Education, which indicated that most of the problems related to violence and vandalism were to be found at the secondary level.) All 148 Connecticut school superintendents were surveyed.

In all, 1,856 instruments were distributed: 148 to superintendents, 183 to principals, and 1,525 to teachers. Each instrument was accompanied by a letter explaining the purpose of the study, a set of instructions, and a stamped, pre-addressed return envelope. All responses were anonymous. Each questionnaire was numbered according to type of school and community to facilitate the analysis of the returns. All questionnaires returned were coded and the information was entered into a computer for processing.

Responses were analyzed by type of community (big city, fringe city, medium city, small town) and by level of school (elementary, junior high and senior high) for teachers and principals. School level designation for teachers was determined by the grade(s) which the respondent reported teaching. Those who taught grades kindergarten through six were included in the "elementary" category, grades seven through nine in the "junior high school" category, and grades 10 through 12 in the "high school" category. Principals were categorized according to the designations of their schools. Principals of combined junior and senior high schools were placed in the "high school" category.

Overall, 55 percent of the questionnaires distributed were completed and returned.

It is important to note that it is not appropriate to generalize from these responses to the school population of the state as a whole. This is true for two reasons. First, although principals were instructed to distribute the teacher questionnaire in a systematic manner based on an

alphabetical listing of faculty names, we cannot be certain that these instructions were followed in every case. And second, since the individuals who received the survey instruments were not compelled to return them, one can speculate as to whether persons who had experienced the more serious problems of school violence would be more (or less) likely to respond, thus distorting the results. Therefore, the reader should use caution when reviewing the findings concerning the nature and extent of violence in the schools of Connecticut. Nevertheless, the survey responses do represent the views and experiences of hundreds of educators from all types of Connecticut communities and schools. They, therefore, provide a useful basis for drawing some general conclusions about the problems of violence in our schools, and they certainly suggest the need for further studies. In other words, one should not assume that because a certain percentage of the teachers who returned the questionnaires indicated that they had been assaulted, the same percentage of all Connecticut teachers was actually assaulted.

Since whatever bias may have existed in the return of the questionnaires was probably similar for the various school levels and community types; however, it is possible to make comparisons among these groupings with some confidence. Therefore, most of the analyses are by level of schooling (elementary, junior high, senior high) and by type of community (big city, fringe city, medium city, and small town).

Reporting the Results

The Council found that the nature and extent of violence and disruption varied considerably from one type of community to another and from one school to another. Therefore, it should be emphasized again that the conclusions presented here are general and not generalizable beyond the data collected.

The following problems are presented in order of rank seriousness by mean scores of all respondents:

Comparison of Rankings of Fourteen School Problems			
	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Principals</u>	<u>Superintendents</u>
1. Destruction of School Property	1	1	2
2. Theft of School Property	2	2	5
3. Drugs	3	3	2
4. Alcohol	6	6	1
5. Theft of Personal Property	5	3	4
6. Destruction of Personal Property	4	7	6
7. Assault on Students	7	5	7
8. Intruders	8	8	8
9. Extortion	9	9	11
10. Violence at Social Events	10	12	10
11. Violence at Sports Events	11	11	9
12. Arson	12	10	12
13. Assault on Staff	13	13	13
14. Weapons	14	14	14

Numbers indicate the rank order of the fourteen problems (with 1 the most serious problem and 14 the least serious) based on the mean scores for each respondent group.

In those instances where two problems received the same mean score from a respondent group, the problems received the same rank number.

Problem Areas

Whenever a percentage is used, the figure represents the total number responding less the number not answering that particular question. Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

1. DESTRUCTION OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Teachers responding to the survey indicated that destruction of school property was no problem (5 percent); slight problem (27 percent); moderate problem (37 percent); serious problem (31 percent).

In no other category did so many teachers consider a problem as "serious" in nature. The percentage of respondents considering a problem area as "serious" will be reported and will contrast that figure with the percentage reporting "no problem" for the remainder of this report where it will aid the reader.

Principals in agreement with their teaching staffs, rate destruction of school property as the most serious problem.

Superintendents, however, rate this area second in importance; nevertheless, few superintendents rate the destruction of school property as "no problem." One can conclude, therefore, that all participants agree that this is a paramount concern for Connecticut educators.

Superintendents who responded to the survey estimated that their districts spent a total of \$900,000 to replace school property lost or damaged due to vandalism during 1978-79. This projects to a statewide estimated total of \$1,800,000.

Responding superintendents estimated that their districts spent \$775,000 on security guards during 1978-79. This projects to a statewide estimate of \$1,640,000 for the cost of security guards.

2. THEFT OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Among all those to whom theft of school property is a problem of any seriousness, this category is second in importance. Teachers and principals agree in percentages rating it "serious" and "no problem." Superintendents rated the problem fifth overall.

Due to questionnaire design, the Council could not determine cost figures for school districts. Principals, however, were asked to include the value of school property stolen during the 1978-79 school year. Their responses (which were based on records in 15 percent of cases, on estimates in 46 percent of cases and 40 percent giving no estimate or not answering) yielded a total value of \$57,811 for stolen school property.

3. DRUG USE

Teachers and principals responding to the survey ranked the use of drugs as the third most serious problem, while superintendents rated alcohol use and drug use as the number one and number two problems, respectively.

Participants in the regional soundings stated that the sale and use of drugs were common in many schools, and that part of the theft problem resulted from the need to get money to buy drugs.

4. ALCOHOL USE

While there is disagreement among teachers and principals on the one hand and superintendents on the other about the relative positions of drug and alcohol use by school children, we view the differences as reflecting the respondent's points of view. Teachers

have less opportunity than principals to view the entire student body. A superintendent, reviewing reports from the school district, has yet another perspective. This difference between groups applies to several areas, and is noted when it occurs.

5. THEFT OF PERSONAL PROPERTY

The theft of personal property is a serious problem in schools serving all types of communities. It appears to be most serious in big city schools, in fringe city secondary schools and in junior high schools serving medium sized cities and small towns.

Of the 824 teachers who responded to our survey, 15 percent indicated that they had had something valued at \$10 or more stolen from them at school during the 1978-79 academic year. The highest theft rates were reported by teachers in big cities (25 percent), in fringe city high schools (19 percent), in medium city junior high schools (19 percent) and in small town junior high schools (17 percent).

Approximately half (47 percent) of the principals who returned questionnaires indicated that they kept a written record of instances of theft of personal property in their schools. Approximately half (49 percent) of the responding superintendents stated that they kept such records at the district level.

The 121 responding principals indicated that a total of 100 thefts of teacher property and 565 thefts of student property (valued at \$10 or more) had come to their attention during the 1978-79 academic year. In 47 cases (47 percent) the theft of teachers' property was reported to the police, while in 146 cases (26 percent)

the theft of students' property was so reported, according to the principals.

Students and teachers at the regional soundings were troubled by thefts of personal property and the problem of theft in general.

6. DESTRUCTION OF PERSONAL PROPERTY

There was a wide range across groups in ranking this problem. Nineteen percent of the teachers responding said it was "no problem," and 13 percent ranked it as a "serious problem." That few reported it was "no problem" accounts for its relatively high rating (fourth) among teachers. Principals and superintendents rank it seventh and sixth, respectively.

7. ASSAULT ON STUDENTS

Assaults on students was rated seventh among the 14 problems by teachers and superintendents, and fifth by principals.

Teachers responded as follows: no problem - 29 percent; slight problem - 37 percent; moderate problem - 23 percent; and serious problem - 9 percent. As noted later in this report, assaults on staff was rated thirteenth, with 61 percent of teachers indicating "no problem."

Teachers view the problem of assault against students as serious in big city schools and in fringe city and medium-sized city secondary schools. Elsewhere, assaults on students is viewed as a slight problem. Principals, however, report that the highest incidence of assaults on students occurs in medium-sized city secondary schools and fringe city junior high schools.

Superintendents agree with teachers as to rating and seriousness of the problem. Principals tend to view assaults on students as a

slightly more serious problem. As noted earlier, principals generally rated problems as slightly less serious than did teachers or superintendents, with this area an exception.

School principals were asked to indicate the number of assaults on students that had come to their attention during the 1978-79 school year, and the number of such assaults that had resulted in injuries that required medical attention. The 121 respondents stated that a total of 727 assaults against students had come to their attention, of which 14 percent resulted in injuries that required medical attention.

Thus, while all three groups viewed assaults on students as a more serious problem than assaults on staff members, combining all data indicates they also viewed assaults on students as a "slight problem" overall.

8. INTRUDERS

The vast majority of violent acts in the schools are committed by students and not by intruders. The majority of teachers (98 percent of 51) who indicated on the survey that they had been assaulted, stated that the acts had been committed by students. Teachers, principals and superintendents rated "intruders" as a "slight problem" overall. The reader should note that this is an assessment for the state as a whole; conditions in individual schools may vary.

According to students who attended the regional soundings, many of the outsiders they see in the schools are former students.

9. EXTORTION

Some of the participants in the regional soundings felt that the problem of extorting from students was significant, while others

did not. Overall, teachers, principals and superintendents who responded to our survey rated extortion as less than a "slight problem." Students were concerned with theft of personal possessions rather than extortion through threats of violence.

10. VIOLENCE AT SOCIAL EVENTS

All groups surveyed indicated this area was generally "no problem" or a "slight problem." Fifty-five percent of teacher replies indicated "no problem" and two percent indicated "serious problem." Superintendents rated the problem the same as teachers, placing it tenth, and in the principals' responses placed it in twelfth position.

11. VIOLENCE AT SPORTS EVENTS

Teachers' and principals' responses ranked violence at sports events eleventh, and the superintendents' responses placed it ninth.

12. ARSON

Teachers and superintendents agree on rating arson, with 60 percent of them indicating it is "no problem." The principals' responses placed this area tenth overall, with 74 percent reporting "no problem."

13. ASSAULTS ON STAFF

Teachers, principals and superintendents who responded to the survey rated assaults on staff as the second least serious of fourteen school disruption problems. Some 6.2 percent of 824 responding faculty members reported that they were the victims of a physical assault ("physical contact with the intent to do harm") during the 1978-79 school year. Four teachers (0.5 percent of all respondents and 7.8 percent of those assaulted), stated that they had required medical attention for injuries received in an assault during 1978-79.

When teachers were asked to rate the seriousness of assaults on teachers in their schools, 61 percent said that it was "no problem," 19 percent said that it was a "slight problem," 8 percent rated it a "moderate problem," and 2 percent indicated it was a "serious problem." These percentages are based on 794 teachers who responded to this question; as 30 stated no opinion.

The 121 principals who responded to the survey indicated that a total of 71 assaults on staff members had come to their attention during the 1978-79 school year. Twenty-nine of these assaults (41 percent) had resulted in injuries that required medical attention.*

14. WEAPONS USE

The incidence of weapons use in Connecticut's schools appears to be relatively low.

Of the 824 teachers responding to the survey, none reported having been the victim of an assault that involved the use of a gun or a knife during the 1978-79 school year. Six teachers (0.7 percent) indicated that they had been assaulted with some other type of object. The 121 principals responding to the survey listed a total of six armed assaults against teachers and 18 against students during 1978-79.

Weapons were rated either as "no problem" or a "slight problem" by the teachers, principals and superintendents surveyed, and was ranked the least serious of the fourteen problems addressed.

*Proportionately, more assaults on staff were reported by principals in junior high schools serving big cities and medium-sized cities. The fact that a much higher proportion of assaults reported to the principals resulted in injury may indicate that only the more serious assaults were brought to their attention.

Additional Findings

Along with reporting the major problems the survey uncovered, the Council intended that the following findings increase the understanding of the nature and extent of violence and vandalism in the Connecticut schools. These findings amalgamate information from the regional soundings as well as the survey.

General Findings

Students and teachers at the regional soundings referred to vandalism -- which includes defacing walls, ceilings and doors; setting small fires; breaking windows, destroying textbooks and equipment, and damaging automobiles. Most believe these acts are committed by a relatively small proportion of the student population.

The survey findings, along with the conversations with teachers and students at the regional soundings, lead the Council to conclude that physical assault is not a matter of great urgency in most schools. Assault among students seems to be sporadic rather than commonplace, and staff members are able to handle it. Nevertheless, when instructional time is devoted to averting or controlling violence, education suffers.

Reporting of Assaults

A substantial number of assaults against teachers apparently go unreported. While more serious incidents (those resulting in injuries that require medical attention) are more likely to be brought to the attention of school and law enforcement authorities, in many cases teachers do not report the incidents to their principals.

Teachers who responded to the survey and stated that they had been the victims of physical assaults were asked whether they had reported the incidents to anyone. Of the 73 assaults listed, teachers indicated that they

had reported 35 (48 percent) to their building principals, 18 (25 percent) to some other school official, and 5 (7 percent) to the police. (A single incident may have been reported to more than one of these officials.)

Teachers at the regional soundings indicated that teachers may decide not to report an incident to the school administration either because their ability to handle students may be questioned, because they fear retaliation from students, or because they doubt that follow-up action will be taken.

Principals do not always notify police of the assaults that come to their attention. For example, of 71 assaults on teachers that came to their attention during 1978-79, principals stated that 32 (45 percent) were reported to the police.

Of the 121 principals responding to the survey, 80 (66 percent) stated that they kept a written record of assaults against staff members. Of 85 superintendents responding, 56 (66 percent) stated that their district maintained a written record of assaults against staff members.

Nevertheless, State of Connecticut Public Act 79-464 requires reporting of such acts by principals and superintendents when teachers request such action.

PUBLIC ACT NO. 79-464

**AN ACT CONCERNING RECORDS OF THREATS AND PHYSICAL
ASSAULTS UPON TEACHERS, SCHOOL PERSONNEL AND STUDENTS.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in
General Assembly convened:

(NEW) (a) Each local and regional board of education shall file a report semi-annually with the state board of education, in a manner prescribed by the commissioner of education, indicating the number of threats and physical assaults made by students upon teachers, administrators and school personnel and the number of physical assaults involving dangerous weapons made by students upon other students.

- (b) Where there is a physical assault made by a student upon a teacher or other school employee on school property or in performance of school duties and such teacher or employee files a written report with the school principal based upon such assault, the school building principal shall report such physical assault to the local police authority.
- (c) No school administrator shall interfere with the right of a teacher or other employee of a board of education to file a complaint with the local police authority in cases of threats of physical violence and in cases of physical assaults by a student against such teacher or employee.
- (d) The state board of education shall adopt regulations in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 of the general statutes in order to develop a standardized reporting system to carry out the purposes of subsection (a) of this act.

Administrative Follow-Up

The majority of teachers who are victims of assault or theft in the schools are not satisfied with the follow-up action taken by administrators in response to the incidents.

Survey respondents who stated that they had been assaulted were asked whether, in their opinion, appropriate action had been taken in response to the incident. Of 51 teachers answering this question, only 23 (45 percent) said there had been appropriate follow-up action in their cases.

With regard to theft of personal property, in 81 cases out of 127 (64 percent) teachers indicated that they did not feel appropriate action had been taken as a result of the incident.

This point was reinforced by the many teachers at the regional soundings who complained that administrators often attempt to play down the seriousness of violent incidents in the schools and that follow-up on complaints is inconsistent.

Fear

A number of big city, fringe city and medium-sized city high school teachers indicated they were afraid to go into some parts of their school buildings during school hours.

A total of 7 percent of all teachers who answered our survey expressed fears, as compared with 18 percent of big city high school teachers, 15 percent of fringe city high school teachers, and 20 percent of medium-sized city high school teachers.

Codes of Conduct

The survey showed that most of Connecticut's secondary schools have written codes of conduct. According to students at the regional sounding, while students commonly receive copies of codes of conduct, they are not often involved in preparing them.

Of 791 teachers responding to a question about codes of conduct, 540 (66 percent) said that their school had a written disciplinary code, 140 (18 percent) said that their school did not have such a code and 111 (14 percent) said that they did not know whether their school did or did not have a written code.

Responding principals indicated that written codes of conduct existed in 91 (75 percent) or 121 schools. In 78 (86 percent) of the 91 schools that had such codes, the principals reported that students had received copies of the documents. Principals stated that the codes were written primarily by school administrators. Many, however, indicated that teachers and members of the board of education participated in determining the code.

Sixty-eight (80 percent) of 85 responding superintendents indicated that their district had a district-wide written code of discipline.

Plans for Dealing with Violence

Most teachers indicate that their roles and responsibilities are not clear in the event of a violent or disruptive incident. In our survey, 44 percent of 803 respondents stated their school had a written plan for dealing with violence.

Suggestions for Improvement

When asked what actions they thought would help reduce the incidence of school violence and disruption, educators most often mentioned "more effective disciplinary procedures." Students at regional soundings also recommended firm disciplinary procedures.

Teachers at the regional soundings frequently called for more leadership and support from school administrators and more involvement from parents in school affairs. Several participants at soundings and survey respondents advocated improving "the general climate" in the schools.

The Council noted that one of the schools it visited seemed to have made real progress in reducing problems of disruption over the past year. Students, teachers and administrators credited the fair and consistent application of a firm disciplinary policy for this development.

This concludes the rendering of results from the Council's deliberations, the state-wide survey, its regional soundings, and its staff-supported literature search. While much of the data lends itself to clear and concrete answers to our basic questions, most educators continue to feel a sense of beginning in their attempts to learn the real causes of violence, vandalism, and disruption in our school system. The Council, as an interested, informed and concerned group, deliberated with considerable caution and care in

developing the following recommendations for action. Its intent was to become pro-active rather than re-active as it accepted the responsibility for formulating solutions for a community of students.

Recommendations

In addition to reporting on the nature and extent of violence and disruption in Connecticut's schools, the Citizens Advisory Council was directed by the State Board of Education to recommend action the State might take in response to those problems.

The Council therefore developed a series of recommendations which if put into effect, could have a real impact on the problems of violence and disruption. Recommendations one through eight are primarily concerned with ways of improving security and dealing with more immediate problems. Each recommendation was accompanied by a rationale, a statement of legislative implications, an estimate of fiscal impact, an assignment of agency responsibility, and a timeline for action.

In making recommendations, the Council recognized that the nature and extent of the problem of violence in schools varies from one community to another. Rather than prescribe a set of "solutions" to be applied uniformly across the state, the Council proposed a series of state programs and services that can be drawn upon by local school districts according to their needs. In this way, the State could meet its obligation to assist in resolving school security problems while preserving local control of the educational program.

RECOMMENDATION #1: PROFESSIONAL TRAINING FOR SCHOOL STAFF MEMBERS

The State's public and private colleges and the University of Connecticut should provide both pre-service and in-service training programs for public school administrators, teachers and support

staff on matters related to the improvement of school climate and the reduction and control of violence and disruption. Institutions of higher education should review their pre-service curricula to determine whether existing courses provide prospective teachers with the skills necessary to manage effectively classroom situations, thereby reducing the likelihood of violence and vandalism.

Professional organizations of teachers and administrators should play an active role in designing staff development programs.

Programs for administrators should focus on ways to involve students, teachers and community members in school governance, due process and school law as they relate to the handling of disciplinary problems, the gathering, analysis and reporting of data on school disruption, and the development of plans to prevent or respond to incidents of violence.

Programs for teachers should focus on effective techniques of classroom management and discipline, on the rights and responsibilities of students and teachers in the disciplinary process, and on the handling of crises.

RECOMMENDATION #2: SCHOOL-BASED RESEARCH ON EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE

The state institutions of higher education, in conjunction with the State Department of Education, should study individual schools to learn methods that achieve effective discipline. The results of such research should be disseminated to interested school districts and to colleges and universities responsible for training teachers and school administrators.

RECOMMENDATION #3: SCHOOL CLIMATE IMPROVEMENT

The State Board of Education should assist local education agencies in assessing and improving the organizational climate in schools requesting such assistance.

RECOMMENDATION #4: INTERAGENCY DELINQUENCY PREVENTION EFFORT

The Connecticut Justice Commission should coordinate the development of an interagency juvenile delinquency prevention program that will provide technical and financial assistance to local communities in promoting development of young people. The program should devote particular attention to the public schools and their relationship to other youth-servicing community institutions.

RECOMMENDATION #5: MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

The State Board of Education should develop a model code of student conduct for consideration by local school districts. Such a model code would spell out the rights and responsibilities of students, staff members and parents, the rules under which the school is to operate, the sanctions to be imposed for violations, and the procedures to be observed in imposing such sanctions.

RECOMMENDATION #6: COMBATING DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE

The State Board of Education in concert with the Connecticut State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council (CADAC) should develop strategies to inform staff, address issues, and prevent the continuing use and abuse of intoxicant or mind-altering substances by school children, in accordance with current state statutes.

RECOMMENDATION #7: LAW RELATED EDUCATION

The State Board of Education should increase the level of technical assistance currently provided to local school districts in Law Related Education (LRE) as a way of familiarizing students, teachers, administrators, and parents with their rights and responsibilities under our legal system and with the importance of their participation in public affairs.

RECOMMENDATION #8: ESTABLISH A BUREAU

The State Board of Education should establish a bureau to help local schools adopt organizational practices and instruction techniques that have been shown to be related to effective schooling. Such an approach should reduce violence and disruption and contribute to the basic missions of the schools. The Council proposes that this new organizational unit be created by reorganizing and reassigning existing personnel and resources within the Department of Education.

RECOMMENDATION #9: PLANS FOR RESPONDING TO VIOLENT INCIDENTS

The State Board of Education should help local education agencies develop school plans for responding to violent or disruptive incidents. Such plans should be developed jointly by school administrators, teachers and local public safety officials, and should be consistent with local board of education policies. They should spell out what is expected of administrators, teachers and law enforcement officers in case of a violent incident in the school, and they should make clear the legal rights and responsibilities of all parties in such circumstances.

RECOMMENDATION #10: CRISIS INTERVENTION CAPABILITY

The State Board of Education should develop a crisis intervention capability within the Department of Education, which would consist of a trained team to help local school authorities deal with serious incidents of violence or vandalism. Members of the team should be knowledgeable about intergroup relations, building and personal security, school-police relations, school law and public information. In addition, the Board should develop a package of training materials and an inventory of available training resources for local school systems that wish to evolve their own crisis intervention techniques.

RECOMMENDATION #11: GUIDELINES AND TRAINING FOR SCHOOL SECURITY PERSONNEL

The Department of Public Safety and Municipal Police Training School, Meriden, and the State Board of Education should develop a set of guidelines for local school systems regarding the employment, training and use of security personnel in the schools. Further, the Agencies should develop in-service training programs for school security personnel and make them available to local education agencies at cost.

RECOMMENDATION #12: ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT FOR DISRUPTIVE STUDENTS

The State Board of Education should help local school districts plan and initiate appropriate alternative programs for students who repeatedly disrupt classes.

RECOMMENDATION #13: COLLECTION OF DATA ON VIOLENCE AND VANDALISM

Pursuant to Public Act 79-464, "An Act Concerning Records of Threats and Physical Assaults upon Teachers, School Personnel and Students," the State Board of Education should develop a system to record and analyze the information on physical assaults against students and staff members which local school districts report.

RECOMMENDATION #14: FOLLOW-UP SERVICES FOR DCYS CLIENTS

The Department of Children and Youth Services should be provided with additional resources so that the Department can prepare juvenile ex-offenders and adjudicated delinquents to re-enter the schools. Such preparation should include a plan for instruction, guidance, and support services appropriate to the needs of the individual young people involved.

RECOMMENDATION #15: SECURITY CONSIDERATION IN SCHOOL BUILDING DESIGN

The State Board of Education should review legislative requirements and suggest whatever new legislation is needed to contend with security in construction plans for new schools. In addition, the Board should assist local school districts that wish to identify the security needs of their school facilities.

RECOMMENDATION #16: ACCESS TO EXISTING STATE SERVICES AND RESOURCES

The State Board of Education should provide local school districts with a central source of information about state services and resources useful in matters related to school violence and disruption.

It is important to note that Recommendations 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 13 have or are currently being implemented by the State Department of Education.